



County of Los Angeles **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

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DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

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Third District

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Fifth District

January 5, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

LACoHelps WEBSITE

On June 24, 2003, your Board approved and authorized the use of \$300,000 from the Information Technology Fund (ITF) to support implementation of the Los Angeles Services Identification and Referral (LASIR) System proposed by the Service Integration Branch (SIB) of my office. Your Board further authorized the expenditure of another \$300,000 from SIB's budget. When this action was approved by your Board in 2003, we were contemplating customizing a web-based information and referral system known as STARS used by the State of Texas. The expenditure figures reported to your Board in 2003 reflected the cost of initially customizing that system and future enhancements.

Following the action by your Board, my office became aware of and investigated an information and referral system developed in the State of Oregon known as OregonHelps. Our research indicated that the OregonHelps system was well received by Oregon residents; was implemented in two additional states, Arizona and New Jersey, with similar positive experience; and was superior to the Texas alternative, which would have been difficult to enhance in the future. The OregonHelps system is written using open source software with a design that supports multiple changes to program information and requirements by simply modifying an existing table. This avoids having to change many lines within the source code itself.

OregonHelps was reviewed with the multi-departmental Data Sharing Work Group of the Service Integration Action Plan on August 4, 2004; the Data Sharing Work Group approved using OregonHelps instead of the Texas alternative. My office also sought and received specific approval from the Chief Information Officer. Based upon these approvals, we are now ready to enter into a sole source, delegated authority agreement to customize the OregonHelps software for use in Los Angeles County. The delegated authority agreement will be with ECONorthwest, a private vendor that originally developed OregonHelps for Multnomah County, Oregon, the licensor of the software. ECONorthwest is the vendor that customized the software for the states of Arizona and New Jersey as well, and is the only vendor that has worked with this software since its development. In addition to being the only proven customizer of the software, contracting with ECONorthwest will reduce the time necessary to implement the system in Los Angeles and diminish the risks of implementation problems.

A requirement of the license agreement is that our system incorporates the word "Help" into its name. Thus, we are renaming the system LACoHelps.

The LACoHelps website will allow members of the public the opportunity to anonymously enter data about their family situations and receive information about health and human services for which they may be eligible. Along with this information they will receive addresses of service centers, necessary forms that can be printed for completion, information about other required documentation, and maps and driving directions. In addition, LACoHelps is intended for use by 211/InfoLine personnel, County staff and our private health and human services contract partners.

We anticipate that LACoHelps will go live ten months after this agreement is executed. ECONorthwest will also host the application. You may view and test the OregonHelps product at OregonHelps.org. A matrix outlining the costs for LACoHelps is attached for your information.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may call Lari Sheehan at (213) 893-2477. We intend to move forward with this agreement in two weeks.

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Attachment

c: Jon W. Fullinwider, Chief Information Officer

LACoHelps Website

COST MATRIX

Description	Cost	CAO Funds	CIO ITF Funds
Perpetual License	\$15,000	\$15,000	
Customization of OregonHelps Source Code to meet LACoHelps functional requirements	\$92,560		\$92,560
3-year hosting, maintenance and support	\$12,610	\$12,610	
Totals	\$120,170	\$27,610	\$92,560